

Before utilizing these guidelines; have you confirmed that your property is within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County? If not, please start at the webpage [linked here](#).

What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Junior ADU?

Accessory Dwelling Unit. An attached or detached dwelling unit that provides **complete independent living facilities** (permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation) for one or more persons and which is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary dwelling. An ADU also includes the following:

- An Efficiency Unit. Residential unit occupied by no more than two persons and which has a minimum floor area of 150 square feet and may have a full or efficiency kitchen or bathroom facility.
- A manufactured home. As defined in the Zoning Code and in Section 18007 of the California Health and Safety Code.

Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU). A residential dwelling unit that is no more than 500 square feet in size and **contained entirely** within the permitted area of a single-family residence. A JADU shall include an efficiency kitchen and may include separate sanitation facilities, or may share sanitation facilities with the existing structure. An efficiency kitchen is a cooking facility with appliances, a food preparation counter, and storage units.

What *isn't* an ADU or JADU?

Detached guest houses or similar that include conditioned space but no kitchen, and that are intended for occasional overnight use. Only one such structure shall be allowed on a parcel. [See the handout for Residential Accessory Structure Standards available at [this link](#) for more information on Guest Houses.]

Second Dwelling Unit (SDU). While SDUs may look similar to ADUs and State requirements provide similar side and rear setbacks for both types of dwellings, there are notable differences. SDUs are only permitted on properties that are eligible to utilize Senate Bill 9 (SB-9) provisions. Additionally, with the exception of size limitations, SDUs are subject to the same development standards as primary dwellings, meaning they can be taller, multiple stories, and trigger full Development Impact and Affordable Housing Ordinance fees. A property is not permitted to have both an SDU and an ADU.

Tiny Homes or similar 'homes on wheels'. Any temporary living quarters (Recreational Vehicle, 'Housecar' or similar) that is regulated by the California Department of Motor Vehicles is not permitted as a dwelling unit in Sacramento County, except when parked at a permitted Mobile Home Park. All dwelling units must be placed on a foundation and meet residential building standards.

Is an ADU or JADU Allowed on my Property?

ADUs and Junior ADUs are permitted on all properties that are used for residential purposes in the following manner:

Type of Primary Dwelling(s)	Allowed ADUs/JADUs
Single Family Dwelling or Halfplex Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One ADU, attached or detached, and, One JADU within the existing space of the primary dwelling.
Multifamily Residential or Duplex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to two new-construction detached ADUs, and, Up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total unit count in ADUs converted from existing non-living space. [Non-living space can include storage rooms, boiler rooms, passageways, attics, basements, or garages.]

Can I Use my ADU or Junior ADU as a Short Term Rental?

An ADU cannot be used for short term rental activity unless it was a permitted ADU prior to January 1, 2020. JADUs and Guest Houses cannot be used for short term rental activity in any circumstance.

What Standards Must I Follow to Build an ADU or JADU?

Table 5.11 of Section 5.4.5.B of the Sacramento County Zoning Code contains the standards for ADUs and JADUs, and is copied below. The table is split into;

1. General Standards,
2. Additional Standards for New Construction, and
3. Additional Standards for Conversions of Existing Space.

Table 5.11 Development Standards for ADUs and JADUs in All Zones	
General Standards	
Number of ADUs and JADUs Per Single Family or Halfplex	1 ADU and 1 JADU
Number of ADUs Per Multifamily Project [1]	<p>New Construction: Properties developed as multifamily may have up to two new-construction detached ADUs</p> <p>Conversion: Properties developed as multifamily may have up to 25% of total unit count in ADUs converted from existing non-living space. [2]</p>

Kitchen Requirement	All ADUs are required to have a kitchen that includes a cooktop/stove and oven or range. JADUs shall have at least an efficiency kitchen.
Minimum ADU or JADU Size (Habitable Square Feet)	150 square feet
Minimum Building Width	N/A
Equipment Encroachment Allowances	Encroachment Allowances as Listed in Section 5.4.5.A, Table 5.10.A
Access	Exterior access separate from the primary dwelling is required.
Owner-occupancy- JADU	The property owner must occupy either the primary dwelling or JADU. Owner occupancy is not required if the owner is a governmental agency, land trust, or housing organization.
Recordation of Deed Restriction- JADU	A Deed Restriction shall be recorded that prohibits sale of the JADU separate from the sale of the single-family residence and restricts the size and attributes of the JADU to conformance with California Government Code Section 65852.22, as amended from time to time.
Dwelling Unit Separation Requirements	<p>ADU- For purposes of any fire or life protection ordinance or regulation, an Accessory Dwelling Unit shall be considered a separate or new dwelling unit.</p> <p>JADU- For purposes of any fire or life protection ordinance or regulation, a Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit shall <u>not</u> be considered a separate or new dwelling unit.</p>
Minimum Parking	<p>For ADUs, one (1) parking space shall be provided, except that parking is not required where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The accessory dwelling unit is located within one-half mile walking distance of public transit. (ii) The accessory dwelling unit is located within an architecturally and historically significant historic district. (iii) The accessory dwelling unit is part of the proposed or existing primary residence or an existing accessory structure. (iv) When on-street parking permits are required but not offered to the occupant of the accessory dwelling unit. (v) Where there is a car share vehicle located within one block of the accessory dwelling unit.
Additional Standards - New Construction	

Maximum Size- ADU [3] [4]	<p><u>Detached</u> 1,200 sq. ft.</p> <p><u>Attached</u> 50% of the habitable sq. ft. of the primary dwelling, or 800 sq. ft., whichever is greater.</p>
Maximum Size – JADU [5]	500 sq. ft. of space within proposed primary dwelling, plus 150 sq. ft. for ingress/egress.
Maximum Building Height [6]	<p>16 feet</p> <p>Or,</p> <p>20 feet if minimum of 10 feet from rear property line and 5 feet from side property line</p>
Foundation	All ADUs shall be constructed on a permanent foundation.
Setbacks [7] [8]	<p>Front Yard- 20 Feet [11]</p> <p>Side Street Yard (corner) - 12.5 Feet [11]</p> <p>Side and Rear Yard- 4 Feet</p>
Maximum Non-Habitable Square Footage Attached to Detached ADU [9]	Maximum shall be as listed for Residential Accessory Structures in Table 5.10.A, and shall be counted towards that square footage limit.
Additional Standards - Conversion of Existing Space/Structure [10]	
Existing Space/Structure	Existing space/structure is limited to permitted space or structures on the subject parcel.
Maximum Size- ADU	Area of existing space/structure, plus 150 sq. ft. for ingress/egress.
Maximum Size- JADU [5]	500 sq. ft. of existing space within primary dwelling, plus 150 sq. ft. for ingress/egress.
Setbacks	<p>Ingress/egress additions shall meet setbacks for new construction ADUs or Junior ADUs.</p> <p>Existing space/structures may remain at setbacks originally permitted.</p>
Conversion of Covered Parking	When a garage, carport, or covered parking structure is demolished or converted in conjunction with the construction of an accessory dwelling unit, replacement parking shall not be required and may be located in any configuration on the same lot as the accessory dwelling unit.
[1] 'Multifamily' for purposes of compliance with State ADU regulations shall mean two or more units on a parcel.	

- [2] Non-livable space can include storage rooms, boiler rooms, passageways, attics, basements, or garages.
- [3] Maximum size limit of a detached ADU is 1,200 square feet for new construction, no further increases allowed.
- [4] If the applicable Zoning Category includes limits on lot coverage or floor area ratios, an ADU (where allowed), not to exceed 800 sq. ft., may be allowed that deviates from these standards. A Planning Director's Determination will be required to review and authorize the deviation.
- [5] Deviations from maximum JADU size are not permitted.
- [6] Detached or attached ADUs greater than 16 feet in height may only be a single story. ADUs attached to a two-story primary dwelling may match the roofline of the primary dwelling so long as they are single story and maintain a minimum of a five foot side yard setback and 10 foot rear yard setback. Deviations to standards may be approved through a Minor Special Development Permit.
- [7] Setbacks less than 5 ft from property line or other structures may require fire walls and/or restrictions on non-protected openings as determined by Fire and Building Permits and Inspection.
- [8] Attached and Detached ADU setbacks are both measured from the wall of the unit to the property lines. Up to a 24" overhang into the required setback area is allowed so long as there is at least three feet from property line.
- [9] Habitable square footage of an ADU shall not be counted towards the Accessory Structure space maximum of Table 5.10.A.
- [10] Conversions of existing dwellings to Accessory Dwelling Units in conjunction with development of a new primary dwelling may utilize these standards.
- [11] Properties located within area-specific zoning ordinances such as but not limited to Special Planning Areas, Neighborhood Preservation Areas, or Planned Developments shall utilize the front yard and side street yard (corner) setbacks specified in the applicable ordinance.

What if I want to Build an ADU or JADU that Doesn't Meet Standards?

Deviations from the standards, except for maximum sizes, may be permitted with a Minor Special Development Permit (SPM). This is an administrative entitlement process, meaning that the request will be reviewed for compliance with the SPM provisions and required findings. While there is no public hearing, if the applicable findings for approval cannot be made then the request may not be approved. Current costs run approximately \$1,337.60 and timelines can range from 3 to 4 months. Contact us through the email address below if you would like more information on this option.

Will Converting an Existing Accessory Structure to an ADU Require a Building Permit?

Yes. A conversion of this type is considered a change in use under the building code and requires the structure to be brought into compliance with current residential building standards. See the information provided by the Building Permits and Inspections Division at <https://building.saccounty.net/HomeOwner/Pages/default.aspx>.

I'd like to Learn More about Impact and Improvement Fee Reductions, Requirements for Solar Panels, Utility Service Requirements, and Related Topics.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has developed a helpful booklet that provides a thorough FAQ of developing ADUs and JADUs in California. The booklet is available at [this link](#) or by going to www.hcd.ca.gov, choosing 'Policy & Research,' and then 'Accessory Dwelling Units'.

You can also request an impact and improvement fee estimate from the County Engineering, Site Improvement and Permits (SIP) Section. More information can be found at <https://engineering.saccounty.net/sips/Pages/Development-Impact-Fees.aspx>.

For more information, please contact Planning and Environmental Review (PER) staff at sacplan@saccounty.gov or go to the PER website: <https://planning.saccounty.gov>.